

POCAHONTAS COUNTY

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Clover Lick, W. Va.

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Chapter 6 section 2

BEAVER CREEK CHURCH

00 The Beaver Creek cemetery is the site of an ancient log church, which has been gone many, many years. There seem to be no records to show when the old church was built, but it is believed to have been built during Dr. John Blain's long pastorate. Dr. Blain was for forty years the pastor of the old Oak Grove Church at Hillsboro, and had all of Pocahontas county for his parish from the 1790's to the late 1830's. This church was built on land belonging to the Poages, who were members of his congregation. Rev. Howard Unerwood and others of the older inhabitants of the community tell me they can remember hearing their parents talk of this church, or some few of them remember it as a place of great revivals and good church services. They say, however, that the old records were all destroyed many years ago.

*This must have been a
Presbyterian church as the
Poages
all were
Presbyt
So was
Dr. Bl*

On the Sunday afternoon nearest Memorial Day the people of Beaver Creek meet at the cemetery to decorate the graves and for a service of songs. No one seems to remember just how many years they have had this annual Memorial Day service, but it has become a big annual event of the community. Judge Summers H. Sharp was the speaker this year, and Calvin W. Price was presented with a handsome gift in recognition of faithful attendance.

This cemetery is well kept, and almost every grave has a marker. The oldest markers are ^{four} old hand hewn ones, three of them to members of the Poage family. It is always a sign of civilization if the community burying ground is shown proper respect by being kept decently

and in order. In this the beaver creek community sets a mighty fine example. Another thing for which these people should be commended is the development of the art of community singing.

After this old log church was torn down, the people worshipped in the school house.

* The beaver Creek Methodist Protestant society was formed as early as 1865, and has worshipped in a school house ever since. There have been some great meetings held at this place, but the society has never been able to build a church. It may have been poverty or lack of enterprise, or possibly want of encouraging leadership. (When the Board of Education built a new school house, the Methodist Protestants bought the old school house and in 1926 dedicated it as a church. This must have been about the time that Dr. Barnes published his history on the churches.)

Rev. A. L. McKeever preached his first sermon at this place. In telling me of his first attempt to preach, he said he had a most embarrassing experience. He did not wear either belt or suspenders in those days, the tension of waistband being regulated by a strap sewed on the hinder part of his pants. When he knelt down to pray, at the beginning of the service, the strap on his trousers broke and when he arose he was in danger of losing them. While the audience was singing he tried to borrow a pin from a brother, but pins were scarce and none was secured. When he arose to speak it was necessary to keep one hand in a pocket by which to keep his pants from falling down. "Now" said he, "If you can imagine a timid young fellow trying to preach his first sermon and hold his pants on at the same time, you may know how I got along." This little incident is told here for

the benefit of any young man who may have been embarrassed when he made his first attempt to preach.

They had a good class, well attended Sunday School, prayer meeting, and Young Peoples League until about three years ago. The pastor on the work at this time was not as friendly with the people as they thought he should be, and the result was that the people and the pastor not understanding each other, they began to neglect the church services. The League was abandoned because of the lack of proper discipline. There has been no Sunday School for the last two years.

Since the union of the Methodist churches, they are trying to unite the Beaver Creek class with that of Cummings Creek, but the people object to it because they think Cummings Creek too far away, especially for those who do not have transportation.

Rev. Howard Underwood tried several years ago to unite these two classes and thought at one time he had it accomplished, but it failed to work out satisfactorily and the idea was abandoned. He says, "Church union has crippled the church work. People don't know where they are. They seem lost." He thinks that if they had one church near the center of the two communities, about where the old log church was, that they might be united, but didn't seem to think it would ever be satisfactory as conditions now exist. Rev. Simpson also seemed doubtful that it could be accomplished. Many of the people seemed to be of the same opinion. They all expressed a reluctance to give up their church, and still believe in the equality and freedom granted them by the Methodist Protestant church. They say they formed a separate church because they did not believe in the Bishop with so much power, but that every man is free and equal. In short, they

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are still not just Methodists but loyal Methodist Protestants in belief. Looks rather like a house divided, until it is being destroyed.

The oldest class list I can find is dated 1908 and gives the following names: Moses Underwood, Henry Slaten, Laura Sharp, Jenie Sharp, Pearl Underwood, Agnes Underwood, Wallace Underwood, Lee Sims, Wallace Sims, Effie Underwood, Howard Underwood, Forest Underwood, Paul Hebb, Lucy Underwood, Martha McComb, E. C. Underwood, Lillian Hebb, Clabe Kellison, Mary Kellison, Henry Gum, Sallie Gum, David Lester, Catherine Underwood, William Buchanan, Dicy Buchanan, and Sarah Mullins. For 1922 it gave the membership as thirty- three, and in 1933 there were only fifteen members listed. Many of those on the roll for 1908 are still living.

Dr. Barnes does not mention burrs Valley as it had been dropped as an appointment when he wrote his history of the churches. There seems to have been quite a large class there at one time. I have been able to get no authentic information on the organization of this class. It was dropped many years ago.

Rev. Underwood says that the early preachers, preached three sermons every Sunday and that the people followed him from one appointment to the next, therefore making it necessary for him to preach three different sermons. This worked a hardship on the preacher but that he rejoiced because people took so much interest. Fifty and a hundred years ago they followed from one appointment to another often traveling many miles horseback, now they object to going a few miles to unite with another church. The young people today are not taught to love the church as the older people did, and there are to many other things to go to.

Rev. Underwood in telling me of his second sermon says that it was preached from the porch of the Cummings Creek school house.

there was an all day gathering and it fell his lot to preach. There were many older and more experienced preachers present and he did not feel altogether equal to the occasion so he chose as his text "God be merciful to me a sinner." He said that he though he could not go far wrong with that text.

* Hist. of the M. P. Church in w. Va.
Dr. I. A. Barnes--1926

oo Pocahontas Times--June 6, 1940

From the people of the community,
Howard Underwood who was reared
in this community and was for many
years pastor in these churches,
Rev. S. R. Simpson the present
pastor, and the records.

*I was in this community
on Aug. 28 and talked
with many of the people,
also visited the cemetery
and church.*